



# *Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors*

## *Supervisor Deanna Alexander, District 18*

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### **Taxicab Permit Lottery Ordinance Will Hurt Small Businesses**

An ordinance change championed by Supervisor John Weishan and aimed at the taxicab industry was heard for a second time by the County Board's Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit on Wednesday.

The resolution would slightly increase the number of taxicab permits available at Gen. Mitchell International Airport (MKE), but more significantly, would cause the County to regularly take all permits away from operators, use a raffle system to redistribute them and randomly designate who may, or may not, conduct business as a driver.

Many taxicab drivers appeared to testify at the hearing. At least one driver alleged the possibility for the board to move forward on the ordinance changes as a way to carry out retribution against the Sanfelippo family, which currently holds such permits. In 2013, State Representative Joe Sanfelippo authored Act 14, the law aimed at reforming the inefficiencies of the Milwaukee County Board.

Another driver said, "This won't affect just one family; its going to affect lots of families."

Yet another pleaded, "This is like Russian Roulette," as he made the figure of a hand pulling a trigger against his head. He apologized for his broken English but cited the family he needs to support with his lifetime investment in his business, and warned the committee, "You're doing the Communist idea!"

Supervisor Weishan tried to justify the proposed lottery system with talk of giving people "opportunity," and creating "equality."

Supervisor Alexander responded, "Cutting people off at the knees is *not* the way to make them equal. It only brings equal disadvantage and we need to aim for creating equal opportunity. I'd love to see more free-market practices at our airport giving more options for independence and success by eliminating the caps all together, and certainly avoiding a ridiculous redistribution system."

The ordinance change was laid over to the April committee cycle.

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